

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

22 January 1969

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(Copy made and sent  
to [REDACTED] thru  
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Dear Frank:

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I should like to pass on to you a more formal, and I hope a more useful, response to your [REDACTED] Chinese Linguistic Project than my interim reply of 7 January. Your Chinese Linguistics Project has been reviewed with care in appropriate offices; the following is a composite of the comments.

The substance of the proposed research project is of interest to the extent that it offers promise of refinement and updating of available information on the numbers and geographic location of speakers of the various Chinese languages and subdialects. Interest in detailed descriptive characterizations of the various languages and dialects--their phonology and morphology--is of very limited interest. Perhaps the military service language schools would find that part of the project of special interest.

With regard to the inadequacy of presently available linguistic maps of China and adjoining areas, we are inclined to feel that the project proposal presents a gloomier view than is justified by the facts. A fair amount of work in ethnolinguistic mapping has, in fact, been done and the admittedly generalized small-scale map in the CIA Map Folio--intentionally limited to the actual political boundaries of China--is not fully representative of the extent or detail of available work on this problem. We recognize that the proposed project could provide a potentially useful compilation

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25X1A5a1 of basic information on a subject that deserves to be better known, and we hope that [REDACTED] will succeed in finding a sponsor. In terms of available funds and relative priorities, however, we do not feel justified in offering financial support to the undertaking.

25X1A5a1 In addition to the existing relevant work summarized in Section III of the proposal, the [REDACTED] researchers might wish to make use of the following items in digging into the geographic distribution aspects of the problem:

a. Naseleniye Kitaya, MNR i Korei (Peoples of China, Mongolian Peoples Republic, and Korea). Moscow. USSR Academy of Sciences. 1959. This map-and-text study was compiled in 1958 in the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences, with S. I. Bruk as principal compiler-author. An English translation of the text is available as JPRS 3710, dated 16 August 1960. Other studies in this series provide similar treatment of areas adjoining China.

b. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia. New Haven. Human Relations Area Files Press. 1964. This study provides treatment of linguistic areas in portions of South China as well as in Mainland Southeast Asia. Thus, by treating minority language areas that extend across China's boundaries in this sector, it provides some of the cross-border coverage that we "ignored" in the Communist China Map Folio.

If a sponsor is found and the project proceeds, it would be hoped that more than 25 copies of the resulting book would be produced. This small quantity hardly seems adequate if the research effort is at all worthwhile.

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25X1A5a1 Finally, it would seem that if the research does proceed, some type of mapping would need to be done by the project team. The proposal makes reference to the fact that the research results would permit marked improvement of existing linguistic maps, but the description of the final product contains no mention of a map. It may be worthwhile, if [REDACTED] is agreeable, for us to volunteer a modest level of cartographic assistance in order to insure that the final product does, in fact, include a map.

Sincerely,

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[REDACTED]  
Chief, Special Research Staff and  
Coordinator for Academic Relations

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jim Brammell 1005 ~~HR~~ Mag.

Jim: This is for your files. Thanks much for the excellent response. As you will see I cribbed most of it.

I will keep the project write up in my [REDACTED] file here, in case you should want to refer to it again one day.

jkk



22 Jan 69  
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